

(For January 2019)

Around the City with City Manager David Thayer

Although the year seemed to fly past much too fast, 2018 was a productive year for the City as we tried to reach our goals. The following are some highlights of our achievements.

- After years of talking about removing the building located at Washington Avenue and Genesee Street, the City was able to purchase the property and raze the structure known as the Nelson building. Hopefully, this year we will see some development on the site.
- We were able to move up our street rebuilding project schedule and had all our streets completed by the end of May avoiding the lock out experienced by many municipalities. We rebuilt River Avenue, a major portion of Hunter Road, and several sections of streets in Strawberry Hill with a total investment of \$425,000.
- Verizon and AT&T upgraded their telecommunication antenna systems on the Stambaugh Water Tank to utilize 5G technology. T- Mobile is creating a major footprint in the Upper Peninsula with the installation of over 259 telecommunication antenna systems with 5G capacity. They are now in our City and have installed new equipment on the Hunter Road Water Tank. Negotiations and construction covered 15 months, and now we have state of the art telecommunications available with the three major carriers.
- Successfully amended our Charter to provide that all Councilpersons, starting in 2019, represent the City at-large. With the change, we can now operate two voting precincts. Former voting Precincts 1 and 2 will become Precinct #1. Former voting Precincts 3 and 4 will become Precinct #2. This change resolves multiple issues including availability of candidates, election personnel, and cost.

- The City updated its web site making it much easier to navigate and find various information including a new GIS component. The GIS map shows property locations. With a click on the property, specific information relevant to that parcel will pop-up including property ID#, ownership, and SEV value.
- We upgraded our Code of Ordinances working through a new company, Municipal Code, and codified several new ordinances into the Code. The Code of Ordinances can be access through our web site.
- Created a Parks and Recreation Committee that is fully ordained as a component of city government.
- Aggressively worked with the County Treasurer to have nine county owned uninhabitable houses demolished. In addition, the City removed three structures. This summer we plan to remove five more structures. The 2019 county planned demolition list for county owned properties in the City has not been released as of this date.
- Became a full participant in the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) Redevelopment Ready Communities program. Enrollment requires the City to engage in the six best practices for economic development. Certification will take two years to achieve.
- Resolved the expired warranty issue with the 2011 Snow Plow truck. The truck never performed as expected and the company was never able to determine the problem. The truck was parked the last two years in an inoperable state. Through extensive negotiations, we were able to trade in the 2011 vehicle for a new 2019 truck at a substantial savings.

- We retained the services of a new auditing firm, Schenck, SC, and reorganized our financial reporting system to better comply with new state reporting requirements. The firm gave the City an unconditional opinion of compliance, the highest statement possible.
- As part of our economic plan to make Iron River a remembered, go to place, we changed our City logo from “the First Consolidated City” to “Where you are always home!” Very soon we will be installing new Welcome Signs sponsored by the DDA sporting our new logo.

I believe we are making headway in turning the City around. Most importantly, people are expressing and feeling confidence in the direction of the City. To me, now having national private marketing metrics noticing us on the map is validating and will lead to the healthy growth we all seek to achieve.

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